



## IS IT AGING OR ALZHEIMER'S?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other intellectual abilities. Those diagnosed with later stage forms of the disease usually can't complete normal, daily tasks on their own or without the help of a caregiver.

Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging, although the greatest known risk factor is increasing age, and the majority of people with Alzheimer's are 65 and older. However, given that Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, symptoms can appear years or even decades before they aggressively manifest. Although there is no cure for the disease, there are treatments that can help slow the disease and its symptoms. Knowing the warning signs and getting treatment as soon as possible could help slow the disease and improve quality of life.

### **EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER'S**

**Loss of memory.** It's common to forget where you put

your keys, but quickly forgetting something you just learned or forgetting about major events is a red flag. If you get lost going to routine places or forget where you are or how you got there, you need to talk to your doctor.

**Unusual behavior.** This can include making bad decisions that you typically wouldn't make or not taking care of yourself like you usually do. For example, not dressing for the right weather or event or not brushing your teeth because you forgot you needed to. Unusual behavior can also include things like putting your phone in the freezer or accusing friends or your spouse of doing odd things (like stealing money from your wallet or hiding your belongings). These could be a warning sign of Alzheimer's.

**Difficulty completing routine tasks.** Even familiar things can become hard. Do you have trouble driving to a location you go to often? Can you complete an ordinary task at work? Do you forget the rules of your favorite game?

**Trouble with words and conversations.** It's common to stumble or mumble in a conversation, but



if you find you're calling common things by the wrong name (like calling a table a chair or you can barely carry a conversation because you can't find any of the words you're looking for, it could be a sign of Alzheimer's.

If you notice these signs, talk with your doctor. He/she will likely perform some evaluations to check your mental and physical status, and may do blood or brain imaging tests to rule out or diagnose any conditions.

### ALZHEIMER'S MYTHS & FACTS

**MYTH:** Dementia is the same thing as Alzheimer's.

**FACT:** Dementia is the broad term used to describe symptoms that negatively affect your learning, memory and cognitive functions. Alzheimer's disease is one form of dementia, accounting for 60 to 80 percent of dementia cases.

**MYTH:** Certain foods can reverse Alzheimer's.

**FACT:** No vitamin, supplement, food, or drug has been shown to cure Alzheimer's. However, antioxidants found in some fruits and vegetables and some oily fish (like salmon) have been found to have some preventive effects on your brain and the disease.

**MYTH:** If you're old, you're going to get Alzheimer's.

**FACT:** Old age is indeed the number one risk factor for Alzheimer's. The older you are, the more likely you are to get it—but it's not an inevitable part of aging, and many adults live well into their 80s and 90s without developing the disease.

